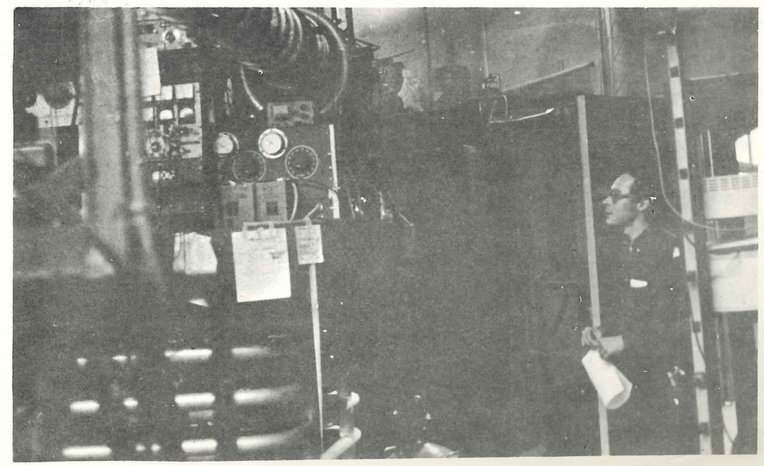
# AIM

THE AMERICAN INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT NEWSLETTER
Vol.4 No.5 MARCH 1, 1969 20c

# STRIKE



# GARBAGE STRIKE

**by Karl Lechow and Polly Gassler**

*On the last day of the maintainence workers strike we spoke to a number of workers on the picket lines and at their local union office. The information gained here as well as much information listed in an an SDS leaflet written in support of the strikers was used in the following article.*

At 12 A.M. Tuesday morning, the city maintainence employees of New Haven, local 713, went out on strike. Their contract had ended a month earlier and they felt that a strike was the only way to bring about a contract which answered their demands. Although the decision to strike was made by a vote of 42 to 41, the walk-out received full support from all the members of the local. Their international union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, refused support, calling it a wildcat strike. This lack of support and the fact that a public statute also makes it illegal for these employees to strike was used by the press, radio and TV to try and mobilize public opinion against the workers.

**SDS Support**

Yale SDS called for support of the strike soon after it started. They interviewed some workers and found a number of common complaints. Most notable were ridiculously low wages and outmoded and unsafe equipment.

They wrote and circulated a leaflet stating some of these facts. For example, some trucks are hardly driveable lacking such parts as fenders, headlights, window wipers, heaters, running boards, and even emergency brakes. In addition the city has refused to equip the trucks with snow tires and chains for icy winter conditions. The city refuses to pay the maintainence employees a minimum wage of $2.35 an hour but puts the minimum at $1.90. This wage for a family of four is a poverty wage.

The workers are forced to work up to 16 hours a day in freezing weather and the city provides no winter clothing. After holidays the men work double shifts at straight pay. The men are not paid for the first hour of breakdown time. A worker who transfers from one section to another within the Public Works Department loses all seniority. The city continues to deny full compensation and an adequate pension plan to its maintainence employees. In general, issues of safety, wages, and seniority were at stake.

**Threats by City**

By Friday, the fourth day of the strike, each of the men had received a telegram threatening them with fines and loss of jobs unless they immediately returned to work. On this day also, Mike Salzano, the president of the local was in court to try to stop an injunction against the union. Although Salzano was not in favor of the penalties which could be levied against him, he remained the representative for the union in its confrontation with the city. The city was charging the local with an illegal strike.

At approximately 4:00 P.M. Friday, the union officials, the city, and the court had come to an understanding. The men were to return to work with no reprisals by the city. If they refused, each man would be fined $2500 per day thereafter and Salzano would be fined $5000 per day and jailed. The stay of strike would last until March 7. Within this time the city and the local would continue to try to draw up a new contract. The city also promised to institute a fact finding board headed by the judge who presided over the injunction hearings.

Friday evening there was a union meeting. The men heard the decision of the court and were told to return to work on Monday. According to SDS members present at the meeting, several men were against returning to work. Apparently they were intimadated by a radio reporter who threatened to put any remarks they might make on the air. Because of this, no united opposition was voiced. No vote was taken and the men returned to work.

**Strike-breaking**

The events of this strike are not uncommon. The city bosses, rather than dealing with the workers' demands, tried to break the strike and the union by using the laws and the news media, falsely accusing the workers of irresponsible lack of concern for the public welfare. This tactic has seemed to work, at least for the present. It is a tactic that is commonly employed. In order to break a strike or a union, a boss must promote division in the ranks. In this case at least two ploys were used. First, in the present contract of the city maintainence employees there are provisions which foster devisiveness among the workers. There are at least six different unskilled categories of work, each category at a different wage level. The workers are not necessarily assigned to these categories by seniority, but are many times placed "indiscriminantly" into one of them. This breeds much jealousy between them. We found a number of workers who directed their frustration at a fellow worker making $.10 more an hour, rather than understanding and fighting their real oppressor, the system.

Secondly, the public, the working people of New Haven were given a derogatory view of the strikers through the news media. They were told the strikers were lawless and irresponsible.

We have no way of telling how the public did in fact view the strike and the strikers. One encouraging fact was that other unionized men respected the picket lines. A second encouraging fact was that the local, to a man, supported the strike. This type of solidarity is of vital importance if a union is to have any power. But this is not enough. Just as solidarity within a distinct local is of importance in gaining power, solidarity among all working people is of even greater importance in gaining power to control their lives.

Certainly, the demands of the union were at the very most minimal demands. A small increase in wages, safer working conditions, and a rational advancment procedure (i.e. based on seniority and ability rather than on favoritism) would not be great social advancement, but merely long overdue rights. Similarly, the right to strike was not even an issue with the union men. Most of them had second jobs and considered themselves fired as soon as they struck. Unfortunately, they felt only that they were acting illegally rather than feeling the law itself should be changed.

If working people, maintenance men, firemen, cops, and all other public employees would communicate and support each other, such anti-worker anti-union laws and practices as used in this strike could not be continued.

*In this Issue:*


Garbage Strike.....p. 2
Research Strike.....p. 4
Grape Strike.....p. 5
Children's School.....p. 7
Child Welfare.....p. 8
Route 34.....p. 10
People's Almanac.....p. 12
GIs Sit-In.....p. 14
John Huggins.....p. 15
Huggins: The End.....p. 16

## people's almanac

**March 1, 1921**—Kronstadt Revolt—Russian sailors rebel against the slowness of the Soviet movement towards Communism.

**March 2, 1867**—Reconstruction Bill was passed over President Johnson's veto. Under the guise of freeing black men the northern section of the United States undertook vast economic and social exploitation of the defeated confederate states.

**March 3, 1934**—The greatest of all bank robbers, John Dillenger, escaped from a specially designed "escape-proof" jail in Crown Point, Ohio.

**March 5, 1770**—Five Americans were killed by British troops during the first armed conflict of the American Revolution. The first to die in what became known as the Boston Massacre was Crispus Attucks, a black seaman and leader in the Sons of Liberty, an early revolutionary group. The words on the monument commemorating the event read:

"Long as in Freedom's cause the
wise contend,
Dear to your Country shall your fame
extend,
While to the world the lettered stone
shall tell,
Where Caldwell, Attucks, Gray, and
Maverick fell."

**March 5, 1871**—Rosa Luxembourg, great revolutionary leader in Germany during the early part of the twentieth century, was born.

**March 8, 1908**—International Woman's Day was founded with a march of working women through New York's Lower East Side.

**March 10, 1913**—Harriet Tubman, runaway slave who led hundreds of other slaves to freedom on her "underground railroad", died. On her monument in Auburn New York, are engraved the words,

"On my underground railroad I never ran my train off the track, and I never lost a passenger."

**March 17, 1912**—The great Lawrence Textile Strike began in Lawrence, Mass. Over 30,000 textile workers organized by the Industrial Workers of the World stayed on strike for months demanding better working conditions, shorter hours and more money. These heroic people faced the armed opposition of the bosses.

# RESEARCH STRIKE
## A FANTASY?

by David Adams

The missile program is expected to be set back for at least a year if the strike continues long. The race to the moon is also expected to be slowed down, as well as work on new methods for anti-guerilla warfare in Latin America. Many major corporations have denounced the strike as detrimental to their competition with European and Japanese industry. The House UnAmerican Activities Committee is threatening an investigation. Spokesmen for the strike have stated that it would continue until the missile decision is rescinded by the President and subject to thorough civilian review. A radical wing of the union is demanding a complete review of all American research priorities.

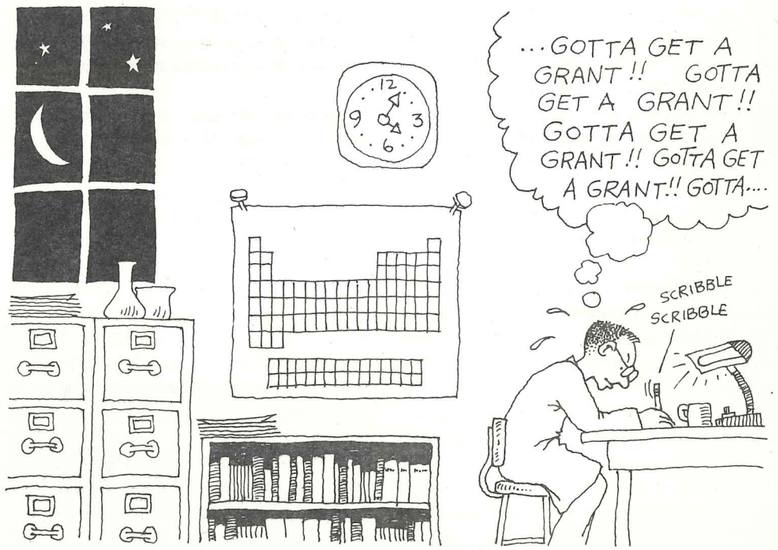
The preceding is only fantasy. Events planned for March 4 at Yale, MIT, and Cornell were originally publicized as a "research strike." The term "strike" came from MIT where students and faculty have been working since last year to establish a day of protest against the sponsorship and use of research by the military. The MIT student committee called the day a strike. Faculty committee called it a "work stoppage."
At Yale after long discussions among radicals and liberals the tone of the day was watered down even more to a "day of reflection," with two panel discussions: "Science and the Military," and "Science and the Direction of American Society."

At first the theme of the day was to be protest against the military uses of research, a "day of conscience," it might have been called. But as some of us discussed the plans we became increasingly aware that the real problem ran much deeper than that. Just as Vietnam is merely a symptom of a far deeper sickness in American society, so the use of scientific research for Vietnam is only on the surface of the misdirected priorities of American research. Science funding accurately reflects Government policy in general. When competition with Russia became a major policy, then the moon race received billions of dollars and our research was channeled accordingly. Since world economic domination by the American corporations is a major national goal, scientific research is brought into line behind the need for technical innovations to keep American industry on top. All of our research is being channeled, not just that with obvious use in Vietnam. We began to go beyond a day of conscience and towards a day of consciousness.

The purpose of March 4 seemed abstract at first, but one evening at the end of a meeting some of us began to talk in personal terms. We had entered science as idealists, enthusiastic about our discipline and seeking to contribute to our society. Many of us are now disillusioned. Like the worker in an assembly line we make a product that is swallowed up in the enormous Machine of American Science which is driving us in a direction we do not want to take. We are being corrupted by competition and grantsmanship no different from what we consciously rejected in business and industry.

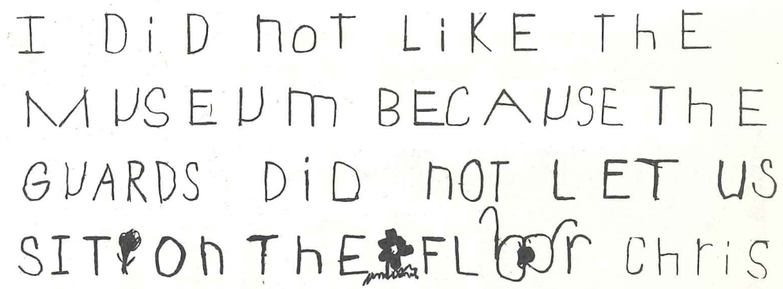
Personal disenchantment has already driven many of our friends out of science. Others are at the point of quitting or are trying to find some position out of the rat race of competition and grantsmanship. Until now each of us has faced the disenchantment privately. Those who quit have often gone to a psychiatrist, believing that the problem was in their head, that they had failed as individuals. Those of us still in science have been isolated from each other by the stressing demands of dissertations and the publish or perish criteria of the career ladder. We have been alienated from people by the pressure to work long hours in the lab and the requirement that we move from university to university every few years.

As we talked together we became conscious that the problem is not in our heads, but in the goals and structure of the society around us. We became conscious that we were not alone, but there were many others coming to the same conclusion. In our common alienation we have caught a glimpse of a potential political power of organized scientists. A new vision has begun to emerge, the vision of a society where scientists would work together rather than compete, for the benefit of the community rather than the goal of political and economic world domination for which we are now being used. If each of us faces his problem alone, dropping out or succumbing to the lure of an individualistic career, no change is possible. But if we join forces and work together, maybe a scientist's union is not impossible. Maybe someday it will be possible to call a true research strike.






# FROM THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL




### When we Went to the Museum

The Children's School went to see "Harlem on my Mind" and while we were there we saw some other parts of the museum.

The art part of the museum was interesting. There was a round table with slides on it. Next to the slides there were buttons with names on them. If you press mosaic and it was a clay painting it wouldn't light up but if it was mosaic it would light up. Maddy thought it was challenging to see if you got them all right.

There was a color wheel you turn and make colors out of pink, blue, and yellow.

Also there were microphones and when you pick them up you hear about some form of art.

Everyone liked the Knight's armour; The helmets had peacock feathers, horns, and tiger heads.

There were also fancy painted guns with ivory designs.

I liked the old, old, old, old bed. It had curtains that pulled around.

The mummies were very interesting. My favorite was a long one for a king's wife. It was covered with many designs. There were models of old Egyption buildings.

In one of the halls there was a great, big, black, marble panther. In another one was lots of jewelry.

While we were waiting for Patty, who was visiting a friend, my impression of New York City was stuck up girls in fur coats and fancy clothes.

*—Leslie Cook*

A boy went to an exhibit of racing cars. But then the cars started. Car 1 was in the lead and car 2 was right behind him.
"Darn it" said the boy.
Engine trouble is not fun, car 5 has it.
Froooommmmm went the cars. The cars went like lightning on the straits. Goddammit said a man X next to the boy.
"Hell" said the boy.
in the end the boy opened his eyelids and let out a whistle. Jumping juniper he shouted.

*—Chris Cook*

I am a boy. I am in a play.
me and Jonathan madeira
we are in the play.
all we need is love
I am in the play
love love love love love love John

*—John Barber, Jr.*

### The Flower

I sat upon the bright,
bright, moon
I thought about the flowers
It seemed to me, that the flowers
were singing.
I thought about it when I went
home and in my sleep.
They sung me to sleep
one night.

*—Rhonda Harris*

### The Children's School

I love the Children's School. It is our school. I like to do the part of puppets. Do you. Like our school.

*—Madeira Harris*

### Cool It, Baby

Cool it, mommy, cool it, mama,
Hey, baby, where you going?
You coming with me tonight?
This is a cool night!
I'm going to have fun with you !
Baby, I got your feeling in my side
Take your shoes and put them on
Because we need shoes, honey
We're going to see The Giant
He's going to dance with US tonight
What you trying to prove?
You trying to prove we aren't going?
I'm going, sugar pie
Hot doggit, we're going to Karate tonight
I'm sweet soul sister
You don't like it you're going to change
with me
Nobody in the street but me!
You dig it or not, prove it if you don't,
girl prove it!

*—Vanessa Harris*

If I were the boss of the house I would make them do the work in the kitchen and clean up the room that I sleep in and make my dinner. Let me stay out late.

The worker's names are Gail and Billy and Joy and Carla and Lolli.

*—Rhonda Lathrop*

### The Rainy Day

The rain was coming down thick, and it was very cloudy. Nobody was outside. It was very wet outside. Everybody was either at home, or in school.

*—Erica Nevins*

# child welfare system

**By Gail Falk**

For years I had heard dreadful stories about experiences friends had had as caseworkers for the welfare department. And so when I left a job at the welfare department this fall with more than a little regret, I wondered if my radical credentials had slipped. I thought it strange that I could have warm feelings for people I had met in the context of a system I felt was so destructive.

Now, as I sift through my feelings about the welfare department, I realize that the horror stories one hears so often do not get to the heart of what is wrong. If the welfare department were free of every sadistic supervisor, of every lazy or insensitive caseworker, of every absurd regulation, it would still wield a total, and therefore unconscionable, power over the lives of the people it claims to serve.

Only after realizing that the people who work in the welfare department are not all bad – that, as a group, they have about the same mix of insight, kindness, selfishness, insecurity as the rest of us – can anyone start to talk about the basic faults of the system. It is easy to point out irrationality or gross inequality within the system, or to talk about how many needy people welfare fails to reach. It is not so easy to get at the reasons welfare would be oppressive even if it were working fairly and had enough money.

What I mean by all this should come a little clearer if I tell you about my job.

### Child Welfare

My job was with the Child Welfare department, which is separate from Aid to Dependent Children. Child Welfare does not get federal matching money, and so its standards and resources depend solely on the beneficent impulses of the state legislature.

A Child Welfare worker is assigned about 50 "cases", that is, children. Most of these children have been committed to the guardianship of the Connecticut Commissioner of Welfare because they are abused, battered, or neglected (by their parents). Some are children of unmarried mothers and were not adopted because of some technicality or because a home was not found. A few are children with physical, mental, or emotional handicaps too serious for their own parents to handle.

Many are in foster homes. Some are in orphanages (usually called "home", "village" or "center"), or in institutions for retarded or disturbed children. More than a few are in mental hospitals or reform schools. An occasional teenager is on "independent living" for want of anywhere else to live.

### Poppa Bernard

It is hard for people who grew up taking their parents for granted to conceive of the kind of power that is involved in state guardianship. The legal parent of every state ward is Commissioner of Welfare Bernard Shapiro. Shapiro is a little white-haired man, who quoted "You Gotta Have Heart" and a Talmudic saying in an inspirational lecture to New Haven caseworkers last summer. I imagine he would make a very nice grandfather. He is clearly not capable of acting as parent for thousands of troubled children, and the ludicrousness of this fiction of state guardianship forms the basis for an unkind reality.

Commissioner Shapiro delegates his "parenthood" to the Child Welfare caseworkers. The caseworker job is an obvious one for girls who have finished college and don't exactly know what to do with themselves but think they want to help people. To qualify, an applicant needs only be a college graduate and score adequately on a general information civil service exam; there are always positions open.

Workers of more than two or three years' experience generally become supervisors, and so direct responsibility for most of the children lies with girls just out of college. The girls seldom have any basis in their own experience for relating to the families or neighborhoods of welfare children; almost all of them are from comfortable middle class homes, the kind that will send a girl through college. Moreover, the girls have no special preparation to accept parental responsibility for 50 children all at once, children often just a few years younger than the caseworker herself.

This parental responsibility does not include the everyday chores of feeding, clothing, bathing, and so on. These are taken care of by the foster home or institution where the child is placed. But parental responsibility does include seeing that money to pay for these things arrives and, to some extent, determining how much money will arrive.

### Important Power

More importantly, parental responsibility means virtually total control of decisions about when and where and whether a child may see other members of his natural family, and about where a child shall live – in what town, in what home, in what kind of institution. It should be clear that the power to decide where a child shall live, and with whom, means power to decide how a child shall live.

I remember how I felt as I looked through the folder of a 14-year-old girl on one of my first days at work. I had never met the girl, I had never lived near her, or known any of her people. I didn't have any idea what she looked like, yet at that moment I had the power to "place" (dispose of) her just about anywhere I liked. Her natural parents would have had no way to challenge my decision (save by a court case, which almost certainly would have been unsuccessful without my cooperation); if they tried to take their child physically, they could be arrested for kidnapping. The child had one way of resisting my decision – running away. A remarkable number of children retained enough spirit to try that.

What does a well-meaning young woman do when confronted with ultimate responsibility for the lives of 50 children, some of whom she does not know, most of whom she will have talked with only once or twice? What, in particular, does she do if they are children she does not really understand, if they are children with extraordinary needs which very few people are capable of understanding, and if the resources to meet these needs are woefully inadequate. The answer, as I saw over and over again, is to hide.

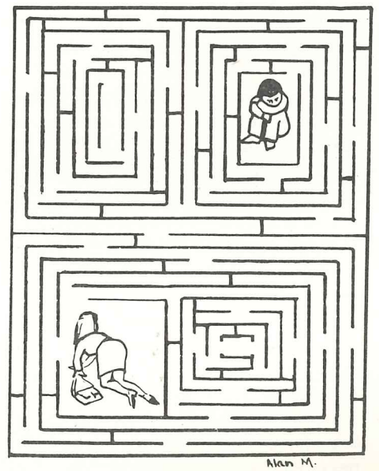
### Hiding

So many ways of hiding develop at a place like the welfare department that I won't begin to list all of them. Some are ways of hiding the magnitude of the decisions from the worker, or displacing the responsibility for them. Some are ways of minimizing contact with the people affected by the decisions, for it is much easier to feel comfortable about a decision concerning a name on a form than to feel sure about doing right by the complexity of a real person.

I don't mean to suggest that the hiding is a conscious thing. An occasional worker would refuse to answer her phone if she thought it might be a "difficult client". But most workers, who came to work promptly at 8:30 every morning and never took a coffee break longer than 15 minutes, would have been puzzled if you said they were hiding.

### Paper Curtains

In a bureaucracy like the welfare department, one of the most common places to hide is in paperwork. It is a cliché to hear workers say they haven't time to visit any poeple because they are so busy filling out forms. I discovered that it was perfectly possible to learn to do the paperwork quickly by figuring out what forms could be ignored and by concentrating on finishing the necessary forms as quickly as possible. I also discovered that when I was tired, or when I needed to make a visit that would involve a difficult decision or confrontation, the paper work seemed to multiply, and reports I might dash off in 15 minutes on another day might take an hour.




I kept myself from hiding in paperwork by my awareness of how I was using it, but I watched other workers spend whole mornings making their way through a single form or a simple report.

### 40-Hour-a-Week Parents

The hours of a welfare worker are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. These are precisely the hours that most children are away from home at school, and that many interested adults – parents, relatives, foster fathers – are at work.

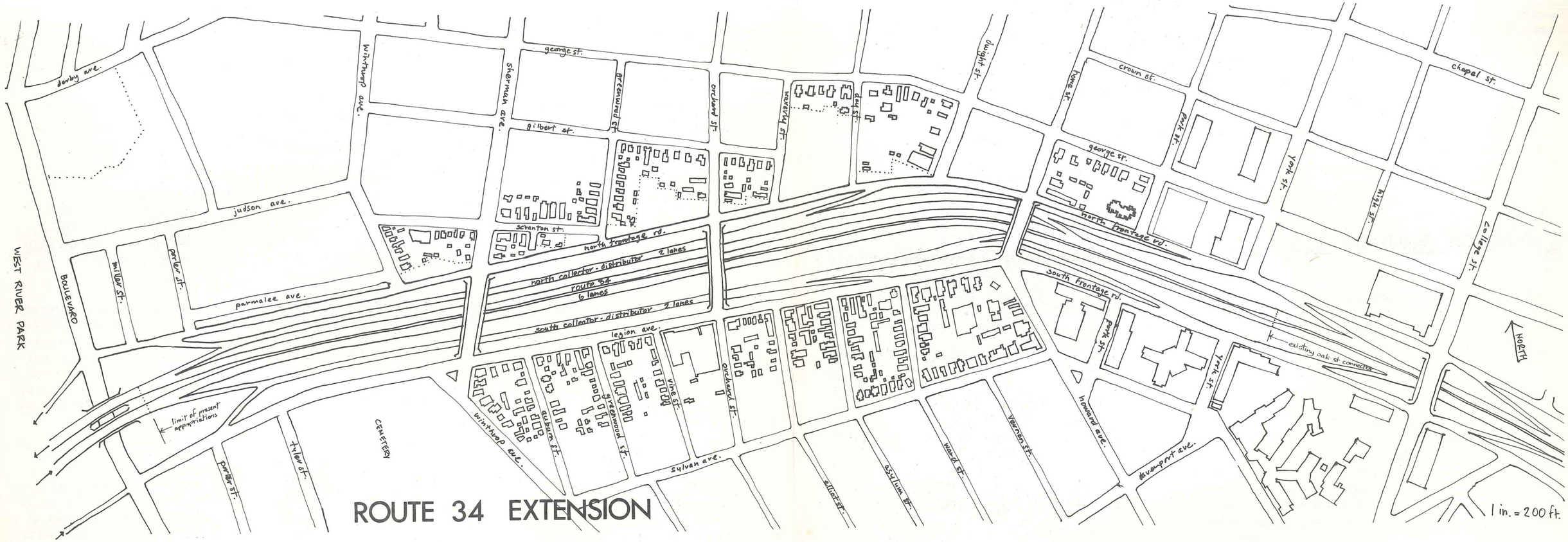
The welfare department does not officially allow for "compensated" time – that is, taking a morning or afternoon off in exchange for an evening or weekend visit. Applying for overtime pay is possible. But the forms are a chore, and, besides, working much more than 40 hours a week is emotionally exhausting.

Most workers build up a firm rule against working overtime; some get unlisted phones so they cannot be reached at home. Soon after I started working at the welfare department, a supervisor advised me never to work past 4:30 and to learn to forget about the kids until I came to work the next morning. The emotional strains of the job can be so great that, from the caseworkers' point of view there are good psychological reasons for doing this.

There are serious psychological consequences for the children, however. A caseworker can easily use the limits of her working hours as an excuse for minimizing contact with the families she should be seeing. Many children's visits to working parents or relatives can occur only on weekends. If the caseworker is required for transportation or supervision, the visits may not happen. Often a worker is willing to arrange an occasional weekend visit for a cooperative family, but will not want to give up a Saturday or Sunday for a visit that may be painful or stormy.

Moreover, emergencies tend to happen after school or on weekends. Crises like accidents arrests, suicide attempts or runaways are precisely the times when a caseworker's authority is needed. Yet a

*continued, Page 13*




# ROUTE 34 EXTENSION

# ROUTE 34: OFFICIAL NONSENSE

**by Harriet Johnson**

The coalition against Route 34 has found that presenting its position and its alternative plans to the city and state authorities is like blowing into a hurricane: what we say never reaches the eye, but adds to the volume of nonsense blowing out from it. In response to our position paper, presented to the State Highway Department in Whethersfield on December 12th (see **AIM Newsletter**, Jan. 15, 1969), Assistant Highway Commissioner Ralph Hager wrote a letter to the coalition, full of wind.

In addition, Mel Adams wrote a letter to Representative Bob Oliver that is the city's official position and answer to our Wethersfield presentation and to some separate remarks of Oliver's. The main points of each letter are summarized below to show the stark difference between the values, assumptions and ambitions of the official state and city engineers on the one hand and the needs and desires of the people on the other hand.

### Hager Letter

The first section of this letter is a meek justification for Route 34. "Studies show," says Hager, "that the existing Route 34 carrying capacity has decreased," resulting in undesirable traffic congestion and high accident potential. "Studies" also show a need for better access to the city from the west and a desirability of removing traffic from city streets.

Hager does not explain why these conditions warrant the building of a 16-lane highway complex. Furthermore, the State Highway people have never been able to produce the "studies" they cite for evidence, in spite of repeated requests. If such studies exist, they are merely traffic counts and computer runs that do not include the probable effects of building mass transit facilities or alternative routes.

Hager also cites as evidence for the need of the highway the fact that the State Legislature has appropriated monies in the General Statutes, and unless this authorization is rescinded, the Highway Commissioner has the responsibility to complete the construction. Of course, legislative authorization is by no means a measure of *need*, and authorization can be rescinded, as we hope to see happen during this legislative session.

The coalition group's suggestion to direct Route 34 traffic downtown via the Boulevard (see **AIM Newsletter**, Oct. 29, 1968) is called impractical in Hager's letter because it would take longer for the automobile driver to reach downtown that way. The State engineers also claim that the traffic volumes are too high. The engineers' projections for the number of vehicles that will use the new Route 34 are highly questionable, and Hager's argument about saving a few driving minutes is disturbingly insensitive when we consider that people's homes and livelihoods are at stake. He argues in favor of the highway design that would destroy the greatest number of houses and small businesses.

The final paragraph of Hager's letter completes the picture of his blindness: "Studies made of mass transit in the New Haven area indicated that bus transportation will continue to complement automobile transportation in the future approximately to the same degree as at present." Thanks a lot! It is presently unacceptable. Obviously the State has no intention of changing its emphasis from highway to mass transit systems, as our needs so desperately demand.

### Adams Letter

Adams, speaking for the city, dismisses our opposition, which is his wont. "Certainly," he says, "we cannot support having continued traffic on Hill and Dwight neighborhood streets..." If he means traffic from the suburbs, why does he encourage this traffic to come to the city by promoting the highway, parking and shopping facilities? Perhaps he means that the city cannot support local traffic on the local streets, for the highway program is destroying the houses and stores, removing the people and their cars, and finally destroying the neighborhood streets themselves.

No longer does Adams favor a narrowing of Route 34 as he said he did in a confrontation last November. Now the city agrees with the standards that the state says it used in designing Route 34. These standards call for a six-lane speedway with two two-lane collector-distributor systems and two frontage roads. Perhaps these excessive standards are appealing because they permit the city to cut the widest possible swathe through neighborhoods they find inconvenient. Of course, the six-lane Howe Street bridge dictated by the standards is an obvious preparation for building the Ring Road. The added traffic coming off the Route 34-Howe interchange will require the widening of Howe street, and the added traffic on Howe will dictate connecting it to the Trumbull Street interchange. We won't let that happen.

Finally, the city dismisses the issue of mass transit as a regional matter, as one that cannot be solved "overnight." No one expects overnight solutions, but the city's nights run into years. "It's a regional matter" has been the city's stock answer for years, not only to the mass transit question, but to school, public housing, and other black-related problems. Funny thing, though, when it comes to other things like highways, parking, and centralized downtown commercial facilities, the city is blind to regional consequences. Other commercial facilities already exist in the region, but the City Planning and Redevelopment Departments, instead of working out a rational distribution of these facilities on a region-wide basis, try to attract everyone to New Haven's downtown area for the profit of land speculators, converting the center of the city into a huge, auto-oriented shopping mall, choked in exhaust fumes.

**Conclusion**

These letters expose the inconsistencies of the planning system whose rhetoric says it is for the people when actually it is against them in every action it takes. Those of us who recognize this have come together in the Route 34 coalition in hopes that we can halt the exploitation of the city. Our most recent action was to submit legislation to rescind the official authorization for constructing Route 34 through the city of New Haven along with a second bill calling for the city and state to turn over the land already acquired to the affected neighborhoods, who would then use it for their basic needs, primarily low-cost housing and neighborhood stores.

The Joint Legislative committee on Roads and Bridges will hold hearings on these bills within two weeks. We are trying to bring the hearings to New Haven and to mobilize as many witnesses as possible to testify at the hearings.

Route 34 is a city-wide problem. It will strike more taxable land from the Grand List; it will multiply air pollution, 50% of which is traced to the gasoline engine; it will further reduce the housing supply; and it will delay development of less expensive train and bus systems. Failure to oppose Route 34 will encourage the authorities in their dream of making the city merely, in the mayor's words, "the nexus of a unique set of highways and highway interchanges."

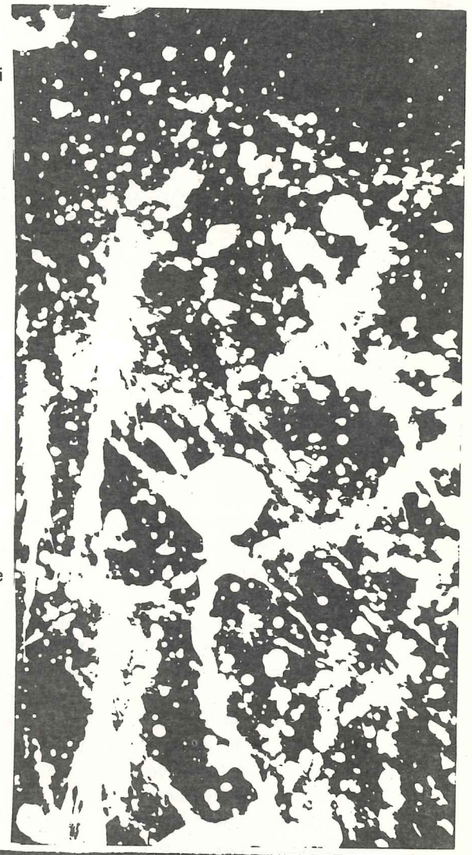
# Golden Age of New Haven

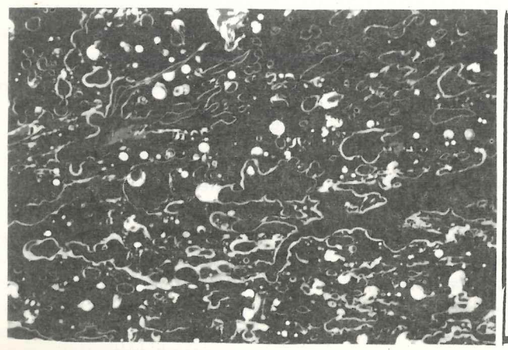
by Tony Dominski

pretty photons of afternoon yellow
ping-pong off elmbranches gargoyles grass
and other amenities of the civilized afternoon
the brassballed multimedia sun
is
high
on
gold
glints of bugles
echoes of hills and hunting horns
rivers of molten rock
Pleistocene
Oligocene
Miocene
The Age of Bronze
day's end — Raj freaks out on the serrated anvil of high rise apartments

tiny ash flowers like four o'clocks blossom in mid-air
dance down into generations of footprints hollowed from asphalt and concrete
and now the fossil light of old photographs hides the city in
a sepia mirage of squids ink
the lights are dimming and the newsreel comes from the
teeth of giant cameras grinding out frames and frames of
human negatives — men who were never there
men who will never come back

you had to agree with the subtitles
they were doing their part
over here over there






# SUBSCRIBE NOW

**Please fill out this form and send it with your check to:**

**AIM Newsletter, 241 Orange St., New Haven, Conn. 06510**

**__ $5 regular subscription __$10 sponsoring subscription**

**Name** _____

**Address** _____ **Zip** _____




**Child Welfare,** *continued from page 9*

child who gets picked up on Friday evening can expect to spend the weekend in juvenile detention, until his caseworker comes to work on Monday morning.

Much more important than its practical limits, the 40-hour-week is a symbol to children who must adapt to its bounds. It is a symbol that they have a legal parent only during business hours, and that her concern for them extends only as long as the work week.

**Professionalism**

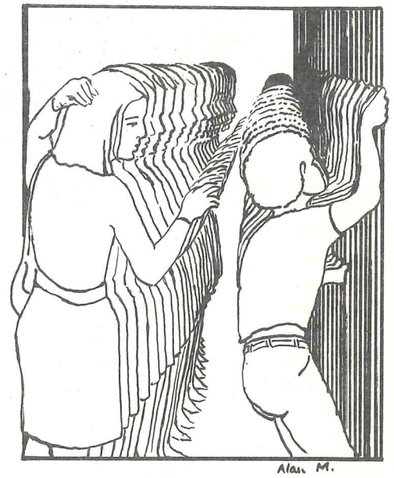
Among the more conscientious workers, professionalism is a defense which provides a variety of ways to hide or displace decisions. A professional mystique gives workers confidence that they have the right to be making decisions about other people's lives.

I suppose this is why new workers are called social workers from the day they start work. Most people in the department would probably admit that treating new employees like initiates into the social work profession is a farce. The two-week orientation period for new workers is no kind of training, and, besides, most workers will quit after a year or two. But being called a social worker can ease the anxieties of a new worker concerned about his God-like authority over virtual strangers.

The myth goes something like this: Social workers know how to deal with people's problems, and, moreover, you are more qualified than relatives, neighbors and friends.

Social work has developed an array of jargon which helps a worker justify what she is doing, especially when she is doing nothing. For example, "character disorder" and "psychopathic personality" were terms I heard and read many times at the welfare department. As far as I could ever find out, these terms meant simply a person who is mentally or emotionally disturbed in such a way that he cannot be helped and cannot get better.

I learned it was an accepted social work principle that adults with character disorders or psychopathic personalities




could not function, and would never be able to function, as adequate parents. Thus, despite the statutory mandate that caseworkers should strive above all to reunite children with their natural families, a caseworker could ignore this mandate if a parent were said to have a character disorder. By a corollary, it didn't much matter how a caseworker treated a person with a psychopathic personality; the person was never going to be emotionally stable anyway, so whatever the caseworker said or did couldn't be considered to do him any harm.

The professional mystique also reinforces most workers' desire to distance themselves from the children. For some reason it is not professional for a caseworker to be called by her first name or to work after hours or to have families she works with to her house or to talk about her ideas or herself — in short, to deal with people in a way that would take them out of the category of clients and into the category of friends.

**Reforms**

Any one of these hiding places could be closed up or compensated for if the welfare department became sufficiently concerned about it. Workers could be drilled in completing forms quickly. A 24-hour emergency number could be manned by a rotating shift of caseworkers. Working hours could be made more flexible. The standards of social work professionalism could be redefined. And yet I do not believe any of these reforms would substantially affect the Child Welfare system.

For it is not the existence of hiding places, but the fact that they are so regularly sought by nearly all caseworkers that is the significant characteristic of the welfare department. The suggestions for change usually offered from within the welfare system do not get at this basic fact. For example:

*More training.* A reform commonly recommended by social workers is "raising standards" for caseworkers, in other words, requiring more social work training. The proposition is that workers who are better prepared will be more secure about dealing with the situations they meet. The fallacy is believing that social work courses provide this preparation. They don't.

*Smaller caseloads.* Caseworkers repeatedly press for smaller caseloads. Certainly caseloads should be reduced; one worker to 50 children is an impossible ratio. But if, as I think, the central problem of the welfare realtionship is the nature of the power held by the caseworker, then decreasing caseloads will not solve the problem but only spread it.

**The Basic Problem**

As I see it, the basic problem of the welfare department is a problem shared by many state and federal level programs to relieve human difficulties: the lack of any organic relationship between the servers and the objects of service. Our society is characterized by such vast differences among racial and economic groups that it is visionary to expect a middle class caseworker to build a strong identification with "her" children on the basis of common humanity, particularly in an area so subject to varying mores, as family structure and values.

I found caseworkers surprisingly sensitive to the value differences between themselves and the families they were involved with. While this awareness had some overtones of snobbishness, most of the workers I knew had a rather honest perception of the limits of their ability to sympathize with and respond to the feelings of the children they were responsible for. Yet it was this very honesty which made the workers insecure about their power.

When adults deal with children, the difference between exercising arbitrary power and acting with concerned responsibility is hard to define, yet crucial. It seems to me that responsibility cannot exist without a sense of identification and commonality between adult and child. Lacking these, the Child Welfare caseworker is nothing more than a hired officer of state power, who may be more or less overbearing depending on how energetically she chooses to exercise her power.

---

What does all this tell us about how to change Child Welfare? For the short run, very little. As an immediate improvement, the welfare department should eliminate the functionally irrelevant college education requirement so it can hire a significant number of black and Spanish-speaking workers. For the long run, however, the criticism in this article gives some indication of the way a better society would care for people who are institutional wards in this society. (I think looking at the way America treats its unwanted old people, mentally retarded, or deviant people would lead to the same conclusion as I have made about welfare.)

Power in the absence of any sense of ...mmon identity becomes arbitrary. As ...ng as cities continue to fragment communities and isolate neighbors from one another, it does not seem likely we could find the kind of commonality that would provide a healthy basis for dealing with society's unwanted children.

Instead, we need institutions that will express and reinforce organic relationships among people. Historically, there have been many forms of organic relationships: extended families, tribes, feudal units. In America, these forms of relationships are probably no longer possible, but the development of responsibility and a sense of identification along neighborhood, race, or economic lines are conceivable. It is with the development of such units of mutual responsibility, which can form the basis for institutions of caring, that we must be concerned.

# GI SIT-IN BRINGS 15 YEARS IN JAIL

**by Phil Singerman**

For those fond of comparing American justice with justice in other countries, the recent proceedings at the Presidio Army Stockade may come as a shock. Not even in Fascist Greece or totalitarian Russia has "justice" been so twisted. Rarely has a military court dealt so harshly with dissenters.

At the Presidio Stockade, GI's are held for such crimes as refusing to kill, visiting their families without permission, and being psychologically unfit for the armed forces. Richard Bunch was in the latter category. The last time this 19-year-old, 120 pound GI went AWOL, his mother committed him to a hospital. Military authorities promised Mrs. Bunch that her son would receive psychiatric care; instead, he was placed in the stockade.

On October 11, 1968, after asking several friends the best way to commit suicide, Richard Bunch walked away from his work detail. A guard blew his head off with a shotgun blast. Three days later, 27 Presidio inmates answered the morning roll call by sitting down and singing peace songs. For this "crime" they are charged with mutiny.

### Cruel and Unusual Punishment

This past week the first three of the "mutineers" were tried, convicted, and sentenced. Nesery Sood, 26 (imprisoned for having visited his three children without permission), received 15 years at hard labor. Louis Osczepinski, 21, was sentenced to 16 years at hard labor. Lawrence Reidel 20, was sentenced to 14 years at hard labor. Punishment for the remaining 22 soldiers (two have escaped) seems certain to be equally severe.

Even the Army admits conditions in the stockade are horrible. In the six months preceding November, 1968, there were 31 suicide attempts. The Army has since placed the Presidio in "emergency" classification.

Within hours after Bunch's murder the Army transferred his killer and declared the shooting "justifiable homicide". An Army Hearing Officer recommended droping the mutiny charge. This recommendation was overruled by the Commanding General of the Sixth Army.

The final verdict was handed down in the face of scientific testimony at the court-martial which proved that the prisoners could not have heard the order they are accused of disobeying.

What can we do? For the moment we can all write letters. Start with Senator Dodd, Senator Ribicoff, Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor, c/o The Pentagon, Arlington, Va. Then write to anyone else you might know. Then call a friend and ask him to write a letter. Then think what it's like to spend fifteen years in a military prison at hard labor. Then call another friend and write another letter.

For further details contact the Draft Action Group/Resistance, 865-4982.

---

Cover: design.....Bill Crawford
top.....Gerhard Gscheidle
middle.....Diane Dexter
Page 4.....Bill Crawford
Page 6.....Lynn Phillips
Page 7.....Chris Van Cleef
Page 8..... Diane Dexter
Pages 9,13.....Alan McKnight
Pages 10-11.....Dave Dickson
Page 20.....Bill Crawford
Page 12.....Alan McKnight



# GRAPE STRIKE

**by John Bancroft**

The agreement to boycott grapes until the farmworkers win their union fight is one of the few programs agreed on by AIM, Mayor Lee, Representative Giamo and Vincent Sirabella. Since most readers of the **Newsletter** are probably already familiar with the grape strike, and have long since stopped eating grapes, this article will concentrate on the history of the farmworker's current struggle. It will attempt to put the current situation in the context of a broader history of radical movements in America.

The current fight to organize the farmworkers of California began with the formation of the National farmworkers Association, the NFWA. This group, led by Cesar Chavez, started to organize among the Mexican grape pickers in 1965.

When it began, the NFWA was to be more than just a union. It did, of course, demand recognition and higher wages. But it also did community organizing, spoke of gaining political power, and had a crusade-like atmosphere about it.

As Chavez said in 1965, "We don't want to model ourselves on industrial unions; that would be bad. We want to get involved in politics, in voter registration, not just contract negotiation....We have to find some cross between being a movement and being a union. The membership must maintain control."

### Class Struggle

There was also a commitment to fight the economic and political interests that were suppressing the farmworkers. The leaders of the group, in particular, made it clear that their fight represented a true class struggle. The farmworkers, whose labor fed the whole country, were underpaid and often starving, while the farmowners, who lived in enormous homes and sent their sons and daughters to elite universities, got richer and richer.

Again, Chavez probably put it most succinctly; in refering to the NFWA organizing, he said, "Basically it's guerrilla warfare. The growers even have airplanes and helicopters."

In the community, the NFWA did a considerable amount of work outside the normal union-organizing activity. A co-op was set up for foodbuying, a community health center was set up by the NFWA, and a newspaper was established. In these and many other ways, the NFWA was a union, and yet more than a union.

Because of this, and because the plight of the farmworker had always been a liberal and radical cause, the NFWA struggle attracted help immediately from other quarters in California, notably from students. When picket lines had to be set up at lonely ranch entrances miles from Delano at 6 a.m., members of SDS and other radical groups were there. When a march to Sacramento was held, students from the Bay Area flocked to help. This march demanded government help for the farm workers. At the time, Governor Brown did not even have the decency to be on hand when the marchers – who had walked over 300 miles – arrived at the state capitol. Because of his obvious bias toward the growers, Brown was considered an enemy of the NFWA.

### Student Radicals Help

Those who were involved in the struggle at that time – the farm workers and their political allies from the movement – will remember these two facts for a long time: student radicals came when the farmworkers asked for help in the crucial early days, and liberals like Governor Brown would not give them the time of day.

The NFWA was not the only group trying to organize farmworkers. In fact, the AFL-CIO had been trying off and on for decades. In 1959 they started something called the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, the AWOC. This group tried standard union techniques, and while they did manage occasionally to drive wages up, they never won the vital union recognition. Part of their failure was due to the fact that as an AFL-CIO union, AWOC was subject to the conservative political pressures of George Meany, Governor Brown, and others with political ties to the old guard unions.

To further complicate the picture, the Teamsters were also trying to organize the farmworkers. They concentrated on the packers and the drivers, and while they had some success, it was also true that the NFWA considered the Teamsters questionable allies because of the past wheeling and dealing the Teamsters had had with the growers.

### Racial Divisions

Organizing the farmworkers was made even more difficult by a divided racial situation. The farmworkers included Mexican-Americans, Filipinoes, and Okies. Although it is hard to generalize, the NFWA had most success organizing the Mexican Americans, while AWOC concentrated on the Filipinoes. The Teamsters, on the other hand, had most success with the Okies, who tended to have the more skilled packing and driving jobs.

The original boycott of 1965 and '66 involved a monumental effort all over the country, and was probably the area in which the Movement was most involved in the NFWA campaign. Boycott centers were established in many large cities, and were usually staffed by SDS or other radical types. In New York, for example,. (where I worked during the summer of 1966) the center staff included radical Catholics, SDS volunteers and CORE members.

The work was incredibly exciting. Most of us had been doing anti-war work for the last year or two, which involved some form of beating one's head against the wall. When we began the boycott work, our job – as now – was to get food chains to take the products of the company NFWA was fighting off their shelves (at that time it was DiGiorgio's S&W line). We prepared picket lines, leafletting, and

**Arvin grape workers wait to meet with DiGiorgio**

so on. The amazing thing was how successful we could be in a short time. We would slap up a somewhat motley picket line in front of a few A&P stores, and the whole chain would quickly give in to our demands and remove the S&W line from their shelves. The reason for this, of course, was that it was not much of a sacrifice for A&P to take away the S&W line, since they could still sell DelMonte, Dole, and all the others. But this didn't matter to us, and we couldn't help but be invigorated by our progress. In a two week period, for example, we had gotten something like 412 stores to remove the S&W line.

### Movement Influence

It was obvious to anyone around the boycott office that the campaign was a movement operation, and that something more than a union campaign was taking place. Aside from the fact that the Movement was providing staff, there were little things every day, like singing We Shall Overcome which used to be a Movement song (despite LBJ), and using the Bread and Puppet theatre at demonstrations.

Right in the middle of this snow-balling operation, the whole thing stopped, for a very good reason: NFWA had won the right to a representation election at DiGiorgio. This was a tremendous victory. Previously, the farmworkers had only triumphed over the Shenley Company, which had a relatively small grape operation. DiGiorgio, however, was one of the giants in California, and both sides felt that the NFWA-DiGiorgio fight would set the pattern for all future organizing of farmworkers.

The election agreed on presented the farmworkers with two choices: first, did they want a union at all; second, which one, the NFWA, the AWOC or the Teamsters. This situation forced a decision upon Chavez and the NFWA.

### AWOC Merger

Faced with this crucial situation, the NFWA decided to merge with the AWOC, and become an official project of the AFL-CIO. Chavez and the others simply felt that they were not strong enough to face the election alone, and that they needed the resources, allies, and organization of the AFL-CIO. Thus, the NFWA and AWOC became the United Farm Worker Organizing Committee, the UFWOC.

This had several consequences. First of all, the word went out to the support committees around the country that criticism of Governor Brown was to stop, and that he was, in fact, to be considered a friend of the farmworker since he had helped set up the election. This caused a great deal of strain among NFWA-support groups, since it involved a complete about-face in position.

Another consequence of the merger into UFWOC was that the organization came under the direct financial and organizational control of the AFL-CIO, specifically, of George Meany. Previously NFWA leaders had said they would only consider joining the AFL-CIO as an independent union, but this proved impossible to accomplish. Instead, Chavez was not officially working for Meany, and the farmworker organization drive came under Meany's direction.

### Power vs. Politics

Becoming a part of the AFL-CIO had other more long-range consequences: the farm worker organizing drive settled down more and more to a standard unionizing drive, rather than a far-ranging political and social drive. Chavez and others had made the conscious decision that they would seek power through standard business union economic means. As he stated a year after the merger, "I've always contended that if you have some economic power you would have the easiest road to political power....I don't understand why labor unions don't have any power in America."

Finally, perhaps the biggest change that took place as a result of the NFWA joining the AFL-CIO was a turning away from radical and anti-establishment activities and rhetoric.

On politics, whereas Chavez had spoken of independent political power in 1965, in 1966 he said, "It's not bad what the two parties do, because they are the pros....I contend that almost any legislator in this country can be gotten to move if the right kind of work is done."

On insurgency, whereas Chavez had referred to the farmworkers as guerrillas in 1965, in 1966 he said concerning Vietnam, "You see, as a group we take great pride in being very loyal and very brave. You can't be brave and loyal unless there is a war....We've been hit a lot harder than Negroes. In the Second World War, the Negroes weren't on the front lines, but the Mexicans and Filipinoes were.Many were killed, and you know, when someone is killed, their family becomes twice as loyal."

### Respectability Increases

The other side of this turn away from insurgency was the fact that the farmworker's struggle became increasingly more respectable. It was at this time, and not earlier, that people like Bobby Kennedy began to support the farmworker's cause.

*continued, Page 19*



# JOHN HUGGINS: THE BEGINNING...

**by Alice Mick**

The bus was loaded with tired, happy boys shouting back and forth at each other and at an occassional pedestrian who caught their attention. The swimming exhibition at the Y.M.C.A. had been a success, all the parents had seemed proud of their sons, and now the bus was headed up Chapel Street, about to climb the long hill which led back to Hopkins Grammar School.

"Hey, Johnny, I smelled your father there!" Laughter swelled, died down, and the buzz of conversation continued.

*Keep your mouth tight shut. Don't say a word. Don't lose control. Don't cry. Don't swear. One more joke, like all the others. Only you can't tell this one at home. How can you talk to your parents about a remark like that?*

---

John Huggins was a native of New Haven. His great grand-parents had come south, to southern New England, from Vermont.

Because both his parents valued education highly, John began nursery school at the age of two. At four years, in kindergarten, he was already developing his critical abilities. One day, when he came home, his mother asked, "How was school today?" "It was dill." "You mean dull?" "No, Mama, *dill*, like a pickle."

When John began grade school, he came with AA's on his report card. Puzzled at first, his parents began to suspect that bright and creative students were not being challenged to use their minds fully and were greatly overrated in school while still not learning what they should. They thought that one way to solve this problem might be to send John to a private school.

### Hopkins Grammar School

Mrs. Huggins still has vivid memories of that experience:

"This was one of our greatest mistakes. Hopkins is a school where they teach very well, but they did not know how to relate to a black student, even though they said they wanted him, and they gave him some little scholarship because of his grades. He was treated extremely badly by students, teachers, and the headmaster, in that when crises arose there was no one at the school who could understand him or come to his aid. What we were not able to do was not done.

**John Huggins**

"He started off as a bright, happy boy—as the report cards say, 'cheerful'—and gradually as the reports came in they began to say, 'Johnny is silent. Johnny is morose. Johnny is not smiling.'

"They did that to him. He had always been able to stand and answer for himself, and make his own decisions. But no one treated him in a direct and honest way."

### Trouble at Hillhouse

By the end of his sophomore year, John Huggins had had enough; with his parents' consent he transferred to Hillhouse High School, disgusted with private school. Hillhouse, however, did not prove to be much of an improvement. Soon after school started that year, John and a group of friends formed an organization called **Aim** (sound familiar?), the purpose of which was to improve conditions in the school and to make it more comfortable for the students (the school was very hot and students were required to wear coats and ties). There were rumors at Hillhouse about a tutoring service run by the principal's wife for certain select students, who paid high prices and then managed to get the prizes and good marks at the end of the year. Black students were not among those students, but *were* among those quickly suspended for infractions of school rules. This was John Huggins' and his friends' reward for their efforts at improving the school.

As a last straw, John was told at the end of the summer that he had failed exams which would have permitted him to go into 11th grade. In 1962, at the age of 17, John ended his career in the New Haven schools.

That fall, he enlisted in the Navy. Although he communicated with his family, he did not stay in contact with friends in New Haven. Four years later, when he returned, many people who had known him here had to get to know him again.

### Work With HPA

Fred Harris, who had begun to work with H.P.A. at that time, remembers their first meeting following John's return. He had not seen much of John Huggins since he was a little boy.

"He came down to the office, and we talked a little bit to each other. I guess it was quite uncomfortable for him; he didn't quite know how to relate to me with that year gap...I was about nine years older. He was wondering what my position was about a whole lot of things, and probably wondering what I thought about him; I guess I was wondering a lot of things about him too.

"He expressed some of his ideas briefly. (He never talked too much to me at first.) Then we started talking a little bit.

"One night we stayed up, talking to each other for 13 hours. We were addressing ourselves to the progress of black people the war in Vietnam, how we could relate to each other—a poor man to someone from a bourgeois background, you know, the whole black thing.

"I think at first we were sort of attacking each other's outer image, but as we went along, when we started talking about this brotherhood thing—unity amongst blacks, then I really started to see how bright he was, and I realized I could learn a lot from him... And maybe he began to think he could learn a little something from me.

"He started to talk about how he got involved. He had been aware, I guess, ever since he was small, going to Hopkins. He saw what was happening in the schools and stuff like that. But I think that the thing that really gave him that jolt was when he was on an aircraft carrier off the coast of Vietnam when the little girls got killed in Birmingham. He said that really blew his mind; he didn't know how to deal with it, and he just started to cry. And all the time people were still giving him orders, telling him what to do.

"That night we talked about a lot of things—the value of a commitment to your people, to a cause. That was a big question for John at that time. He was very much aware of his background, and he knew that everyone else was aware of it. At times that may have tended to get in the way, but I think he dealt with it very well. And the brothers really did start digging him."

For eight months Huggins worked steadily for H.P.A. According to Courtland Wilson, his uncle, this was an important learning experience for him.

"John was slow and thoughtful at this time. He was a quiet guy too... He wasn't a noisy person at meetings. Many times he would go for hours and hours without saying a word, but he would pick up bits of information that were going to be meaningful to him later on... He was being quiet in order to learn, and he knew this was a process he had to go through.

"He was never influenced by any single person's attitude. He took them all together and let that be sort of a guide. He had come to the realization that you can't just go spouting off at the mouth before you know what you are doing.

"I think that this was a lot of what made him decide to go to Lincoln University (he started in February of 1967). He wasn't ready to attack problems just with rhetoric. He felt that there were certain things he needed to learn, tools that he would be able to use. He wanted to find people of like mind who had the same interests as he did, and who wanted to work on the same problems. I think that was his main reason for choosing to go to a predominantly black school like Lincoln.

"You may wonder why he left. After two semesters he had become fully aware of the power of Linclon University. He saw that some of the black institutions are controlled just like anything else in America. The trustees can do what they please, and when you have no power, you can't do anything.

"When he left Lincoln in November of 1967, I think he had the dedication to do what was necessary, and I think he was ready for the total involvement of himself, and leaving friends and family if necessary, in order to do it."

In November, after leaving college, John Huggins went to Los Angeles, Calif., where he became a member of the Black Panther Party and worked until his death in January of 1969.

# HUGGINS: THE END

*The following is an interview with Janice Culberson, a member of the Black Panther Party, who shared a house with John Huggins and his wife in Los Angeles. At the time of the interview, she was visiting the Huggins family in New Haven a few weeks after Huggins' death.*

**Could you tell me how you got to know John Huggins?**
Well, it was in the last part of September, soon after I joined the Panthers. I didn't know who John was at first. I just saw this little bearded cat around the office. First I found out he was Erika's husband, then I found out who Erika was.

John was speaking at a lot of meetings then, and Erika used to take me along so I could get this political education from both of them. I loved to hear him speak; he was very articulate, very outspoken. It seemed like he knew a lot about everything. And the way he would captivate all sizes of audiences—small, large, two people, one person. He had a lot of patience, too, he had to, because some of the things they'd ask him, they were ridiculous.

**What kind of audiences was he speaking to?**
Mostly at that time they were white and liberal. They came to find out about the Panther party, and about the whole political scene around the Panthers. And they wanted to know what they could do.

John always encouraged the white audiences to join Peace and Freedom, or if they didn't want to join that, to join SDS or some other organization. Just so they were doing something other than sitting there and asking questions, then going home and patting themselves on the back and saying, "Well, I went to a meeting last night." He always wanted to see some action, a follow-up.

Later, both Erika and John made me speak to these groups, and it's good experience and good discipline. It makes you stay on your toes and keep up with your study, too. I was really involved in the Panthers at that time. Like I'd been laid off from work, and I was working full-time for the Party.



John would help me plan out some things for the speaking engagements. He was always giving lectures, you know. I would ask him a question and he would sit down and give me a little lecture on it that I could remember. He had a way of explaining things like no one else could.

He could explain the ten-point program of the Panther Party to anyone: a drunk, a kindergartner, an old man, a young boojy [bourgeois] woman. And he told them about it so that they could understand it and realize what it meant. Like I said, he had great patience.

**I understand that John was a student at U.C.L.A. How did his work as a Panther fit in with his being at school?**
Well, in a way he was working as a Panther, and in a way he was working just as a student. He had come into the university as part of the high potential program [a sort of Transitional Year]. His political activity as a student was to be in contact with and follow up the Black Student Unions. Whatever the B.S.U.'s wanted, the Panthers supported. John would give speeches for them, too.

Of course, everyone knew he was a Panther, and it gave students insight into the Panthers; it cleared up a lot of misconceptions about the Panthers and showed the student just where the Panthers were. Wherever they were, that's where we were. Whatever they wanted, that's what we wanted. And they came to realize that; so that's why, in the end, the students supported the Panthers completely.

**What was happening on the campus at that time?**
At this time the BSU's were trying to make certain demands; so they were having meetings about this. There was a Community Advisory Committee for the BSU's, but the students and the people hadn't picked this committee; it included Ron Karenga, the Black Congress (an umbrella organization for black groups in the community), and other establishment people in the community like lawyers and doctors.

Also, an Afro-American Studies Program was about to be started on the campus. The Advisory Committee was supporting Charles Thomas, Karenga's man, for director of the program. As director, he would have created a program that was supposedly culture-oriented and that would have no real black history or political courses.

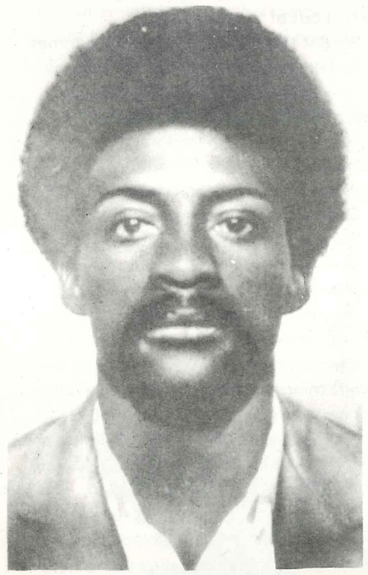
I remember that during these meetings John said that he wouldn't openly come out and say certain things; what he would do was throw out questions to the students, make statements, and let them make decisions, let them think about whatever else had to go on.

At this time Ron Karenga was trying to force people into saying they would keep the committees as they stood because most of the people on them had been put in by him; so that would mean that he would have control of everything, that students still wouldn't have the right to control their own destiny on campus.

**Who is Ron Karenga?**
He's the head of the US organization. The letters don't stand for anything, but they have a little slogan: "Wherever we are, US is," or some crazy thing like that.

**What does this group do?**
I don't know what they do. Mostly what they do is threaten people. In a way it's a little gang group, instead of having any political direction.

**But I take it that it's a black group and that's its reason for being together.**
Supposedly. I guess you could describe them as a black cultural nationalist group. Their main interest is supposedly to develop black identity; and black unity, by wearing naturals, bubas and dashikis, by having houses with such-and-such Swahili names, by supposedly developing a communal attitude towards each other. In fact, the truth is that Karenga himself is a part of the Los Angeles power structure and has close relations with the pigs.



**Bunchy Carter, who was killed at the same time as Huggins.**

**Did the Panthers come into conflict with this?**
Yes, because the Panthers felt that we have a culture, a revolutionary culture; and it didn't make any difference what you wore. You alienate people by telling them they have to have a natural or speak Swahili or anything like that. We didn't care if people's hair was a process, conk, or if they didn't have any, or if they didn't comb it.

It was where their minds were, you know, and we felt that any organization that wasn't doing anything for the people, the masses, that didn't have their interests at heart, wasn't doing anything. If you investigated, you would find that the membership of US had many restrictions on it, that you had to be in a little clique to get in, and that you had to do this and that in order to stay in the organization. For instance, some of the women *had* to shave their heads for a certain stature.

And they didn't have the interests of the masses at heart; they didn't have any political direction. A club that would just take people out of context, out of the reality they were living in, we weren't interested in it. To put people in a little room and say, "Well, the conditions on the outside don't matter; everything will be great as long as you have a natural." Well, we couldn't dig that; it was like a reality cop-out, trying to evade the situation.

**What exactly was happening last winter?**
Around this time, the US organization and Ron Karenga had gone around threatening people so they would vote his way and so that he would have control of BSU activities at UCLA. John and other Panthers on campus were raising questions in students' minds with the result that before the last meeting Ron Karenga was exposed for what he was.

You see, Ron Karenga has always had this status thing around him; he had never been booed, and at one of the last meetings he was booed right out of the room. The students kicked him out. At this meeting he brought 75 of his henchmen there, and the students got up and told

him what they thought of him: that he was trying to run this thing, that this was their BSU, and that they didn't want anything else to do with him. Then he got up to talk and they booed him out. The only thing he said was, "You all better stop that."

This hurt him greatly; it hurt his ego; it was like dying. Not only the BSU's but the masses of people were finding him out for what he was (which was a little punk). I feel that this plus other confrontations with the Panthers was one of the reasons that he had his henchmen coming out to UCLA with guns.

**They did that?**
They did, and they would not intimidate men. That was the level they were on; they would get to the women and threaten them. It had become a strong issue because Bunchy had made an order that if anybody on campus saw any of them dudes messing with any sisters, they were to beat them in the head. We wouldn't stand for this.

**Who was Bunchy?**
Bunchy was Minister of Defense for the Black Panther Party—the Deputy Minister of Defense, for Southern California. His position was similar to that of Huey Newton's.

**Can you tell me, if you wouldn't mind, about the events surrounding John's death.**
Early on that Friday I left with John and Bunchy to go to UCLA. We were late getting there, and the meeting had already started. (It was supposed to start at about 10, and we didn't get there until about 11.) John had on his suit and boots, and he kept asking me how he looked.

It wasn't really an important meeting—a BSU student meeting to decide some specific points because later that day there was supposed to be a meeting with the teachers.

We went into this meeting at Campbell Hall, sort of a Cafeteria. There were a lot of students there. We didn't go in immediately, but stood in the hall and talked for awhile. First John went in, then Bunchy went in, and so I went in and listened to what went on for awhile. Then I had to leave for an appointment; so I went. A little later, 2:00 or 2:30, Elaine (another Panther) found me and said that there was some shooting at Campbell Hall and that John was shot, and possibly Bunchy was shot. We immediately ran over there to see what was going on.

People were standing out in front and back, and there was an ambulance, but nothing was happening. So we thought that he was just hurt, you know; we were hoping that one of them was taking care of the other one, that both of them weren't dead. Then we found out there was nothing else to be done. We still didn't know who was shot, who was dead, and who wasn't.

**You couldn't get close enough?**
This was the weirdest thing: they were letting people out of the building but didn't let anyone in. I couldn't understand why they were letting people out at that time.

**Did you have a feeling for who had done it?**
I knew who had done it. Not the specific person, but the way things were going, I knew who had done it. I knew it wasn't a student on the UCLA campus. Immediately after that, we went back to the house; Our purpose was to get the baby and Erika out of the house, to get everything else we had out of that house.

We got there and started packing things up to take out of the house. On the way there we had heard that John had been killed. We got back to the house and saw Erika, and she said "Was John shot?" Elaine told her, "Yes." And she got me and said, "Janice, is John dead?" "Yes."

She said, "Oh, that's what I thought."

Then she looked at us and said, "Does anyone want any coffee?" and she went into the kitchen and made a big pot of coffee and lined up the coffee on the sink.

I remember this because none of us got to drink that coffee. We were getting the baby's things together. I packed her bags, and we were just getting everything ready when I went downstairs. There were two ways to get into the house, and I had gone out the door to the edge of the steps.

There was this pig in a dark suit, a beige trenchcoat, holding a black shotgun, pointing it at these two fellows who were putting things into the station wagon. I hollered to them that the pigs were outside, then ran in and closed the door downstairs, and told everybody to get on the floor. We put the baby in a coat and slipped her under the bed.That was when they told us to come downstairs, right then, with our hands over our heads or they were going to shoot us.

I came down just before Erika and the baby, and I told him that Erika was coming down with the baby and she couldn't put her hands over her head. He said he didn't care what she had, she better come down right then. When she came, they didn't believe there was a baby in the coat and they kept snatching at it until they almost made the baby fall out.

A little bit later that day when we got down to the precinct house we learned that Bunchy was also dead, definitely.

That was a weird trip. We were all handcuffed together. O course, we were all so shocked about John and Bunchy that we didn't really care about going to jail. That was petty. But those pigs' attitude was terrible. They kept throwing in all kind of things like, "I haven't had any target practice, so why don't you run?" Really intimidating us: wagging their sticks at us and saying, "You're Panthers, aren't you? I see you won't answer. We ought to take you for a ride." Weird things like that. They were really dumb.

**Did they actually accuse you of conspiracy?**
Oh, yes, they accused us of conspiracy to commit assault with a deadly weapon, and carrying a concealed weapon. Why, with what I had on, a micro-mini-dress, I couldn't have carried anything if I'd wanted to. They actually charged us with this, but I had a feeling that we wouldn't go to court. My feelings proved right.

**They dropped the charges?**
Right, they dropped the charges. We were never arraigned. They just wanted to take us down there and harass us. They pulled a three week old baby out in the air at 5:00. Then once they got it down there, they had the nerve to say, "If we find any marijuana in this coat we'll book the kid for possession."

The thing that is important to know about John and Bunchy's murder is that it was a clear political assassination. It was not the result of a rift between two black organizations who both have the interests of the people at heart. Ron Karenga and his US organization are part and parcel of the power structure. The power structure wanted John and Bunchy dead, and we have good reason to believe that the pigs paid Karenga to have his henchmen do it. They have finally gotten around to arresting two brothers who are members of US, but nothing's happening.

**What do you think is going to happen now?**
I think that the people will deal with Ron Karenga. As for us, we have a lawsuit against the police department for all the things they did to us. I'd even like to get one against them for making us eat with oversize brass table spoons and get up at 4:00 a.m. while we were in jail; for tearing up the house; for tearing down posters; for everything.

Things are a little chaotic now, and I'm still confused because everything happened so fast. But I think things are working out. (The Panthers are working full-time to get this thing together. We are not really disorganized, but there's a lot of things going on at one time, and there's a lot of confusion going on.)

The way it was before, the living situation, it was just too good. That place where we lived, it wasn't just a house. Like it was the center of a community, everybody came there. There was just a feeling that everyone had for one another. Like we didn't call the baby John and Erika's baby; it was our baby—the Panther's Party's baby—you know, It was beautiful; it really was. It was something too good to last.

**Do you think you'll be living in a situation like that after you get back?**
I don't know. We probably will, I guess, for strength and unity. We don't like anybody to live by themselves anyway.

As soon as we get back we have to work on the community dinner thing, and on plans for Huey Newton's birthday, which will be celebrated from Feb. 10th through the 17th. And there's a lot of odds and ends we have to work on, like lawyers and bail bonds. There is plenty of work to do.

That's what John was doing when he died, and that's what I want to do. Working with the Panther Party gives some real meaning to your living, and to your dying, too. Let me tell you just a few lines from a poem Bunchy wrote. I know them by heart and they really express what we are feeling:

*For a slave of natural death who dies*
*Can't balance out to two dead flies.*
*I'd rather be without the shame*
*A bullet lodged within my brain.*

*If I were not to reach our goal,*
*May bleeding cancer torment my soul.*

*—Alprentice Carter*
*(Bunchy)*

**GRAPE STRIKE, Contd.**

The point here is not that Chavez is a fink. Rather, the vital question raised is whether the farm worker organizing campaign could have gone in any other direction. This is a question that applies to all union organizing that has taken place. Certainly there were radicals in the 1930's who hoped for more radical changes from the CIO organizing drive than in fact took place.

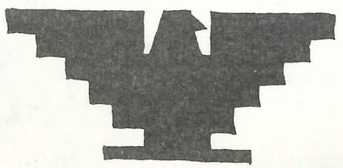
First of all, it should be mentioned that Chavez felt that not only was the Movement too weak an ally to rely on, but he specifically felt let down by the Movement during the period described here. He felt that radicals regarded the NFWA campaign as a lark, showed up when it was fun, but often weren't there when the chips were down. As a radical who worked with the NFWA but planned to go back to school in the fall, I can hardly argue with this contention.

**Radical Labor Party Needed**

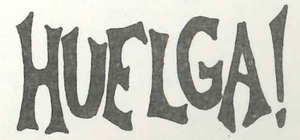
But the main thing here is not a matter of finding fault. On a broader level, the tragic fact was that the NFWA needed allies, and had no one else but the AFL-CIO to turn to. There was no kind of radical labor party or radical union coalition. Perhaps NFWA could have become a truly radical union, part of a broad economic and social radical movement. But such a movement did not, and does not, yet exist. And until it does, new unions, no matter how insurgent in spirit, will have no choice but to follow in the path of older unions. This only raises, but does not answer, the question of what specific path a radical union could follow, in the best of all possible radical worlds.

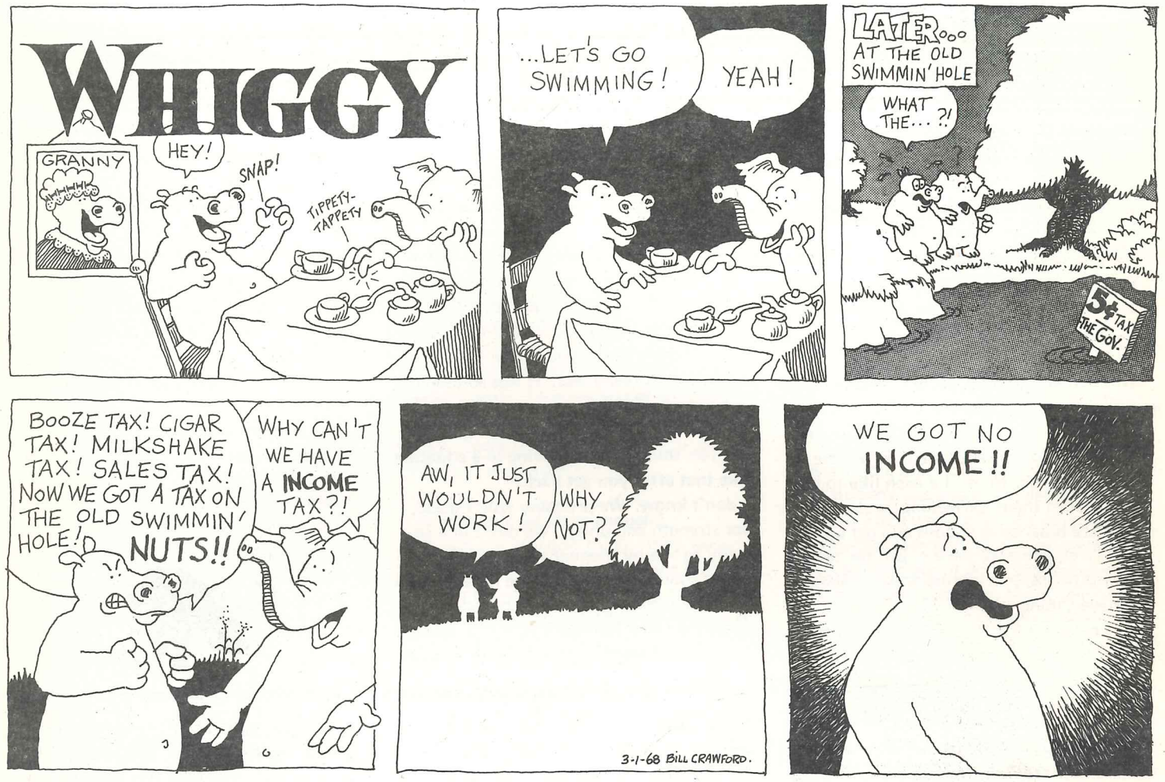
In any case, the NFWA, now the NFWOC, lost a good deal of its radical spirit after 1966. Many of its non-union activities, which had been used for political organizing, now became social service-oriented projects. Slowly but steadily, the farm worker struggle, while still exciting as a new union, became more and more a standard union organizing campaign.

Nothing said here should take away from the fact that the farmworkers cause is an important one that should be actively supported by liberals and radicals alike. New union organizing, even if it goes no further than that, is a vital activity that there is precious little of today in the United States. Someday, perhaps, the Movement will be strong enough to give continuing support to groups like the NFWA so that they will be able to advance as organizations for radical change. In the meantime, the more narrow unionization goal is important in its own right, and support should be given by all to the farm worker's quest for their minimal but basic economic right.



**All individuals who are interested in helping the Boycott against table grapes here in New Haven should contact Bill Chickering at the Boycott Office, 2nd floor, 238 Dwight St., or call 787-3013 or 787-5180. Organizational and picketing help is needed.**





**To the AIM Newsletter:**

I would appreciate it if in the next issue you could include a reminder to readers that a bill has been introduced into the Connecticut General Assembly to abolish the death penalty and that it would behoove them to write their state representative urging him to vote for the bill if it reaches the floor for a vote (see May 15, 1968 issue of **AIM Newsletter** for article on capital punishment in Connecticut).

Along this same line it might also be worthwhile to print a list of local state Assembly representatives and state senators, the area they represent and their mailing address for ohter future use. Such a list can be obtained from Secretary of State of Conn. Ella Grasso.

Sincerely,

**Craig S. O'Connell**

Staff for this issue:

John Bancroft
Bill Crawford
Diane Dexter
Joelle Dominski
Sasha Harmon
Peggy Howard
Alan McKnight
Alice Mick
Tom Murphy
Peter J. O'Connell
Liz Rose
Anne Smock
Stephanie Weissman
Harry Klein

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT
241 Orange Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510

The American Independent Movement Newsletter is published every two weeks. Letters to the editor are welcome. Subscriptions to the AIM Newsletter cost $5 per year, $10 for a sponsoring subscription. Make checks payable to the AIM Newsletter and mail to AIM, 241 Orange Street, New Haven, Conn. 06510. For information, write – or call 787-0123.

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
3.6 c
New Haven, Conn.
Permit No. 89